<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A node <u>device</u> which newly joins a network formed by a plurality of nodes, the node <u>device</u> comprising:

a virtual connection establisher unit configured to establish virtual connections with the plurality of nodes;

an average metric value calculator unit configured to calculate an average metric value of routes to the plurality of nodes via each of the virtual connections; and

a connection establisher unit configured to establish a connection with the node to which the virtual connection having [[the]] <u>a</u> smallest average metric value is established.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The node <u>device</u> according to claim 1, further comprising:

an acquirer unit configured to acquire node-node connection information of an adjacent node to any node forming the network, from the any node; and wherein

the average metric value calculator unit is configured to calculate the average metric value in accordance with the node-node connection information.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The node <u>device</u> according to claim 2, wherein

the node-node connection information includes a node ID for identifying the adjacent node, a metric value of a route between the any node and the adjacent node, and [[the]] <u>a</u> number of nodes adjacent to the adjacent node.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The node <u>device</u> according to claim 3, wherein

the metric value includes at least one of [[the]] a number of hops, network bandwidth,

communication costs, delay, load, MTU, or reliability.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The node device according to claim 3, wherein

the acquirer unit is configured to notify, to the any node, a type of a metric value or a

combination of metric values to be included in the node-node connection information.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A method for generating a network topology in which

a new node joins a network formed by a plurality of nodes, the method comprising:

establishing a virtual connection between the new node and each of the plurality of

nodes;

calculating an average metric value of routes from the new node to the plurality of

nodes via each of the virtual connections; and

establishing a connection between the new node and the node to which the virtual

connection having [[the]] a smallest average metric value is established, so that the new node

joins the network.